

# Gulf Coast Ecosystem Restoration Council

September 16, 2015



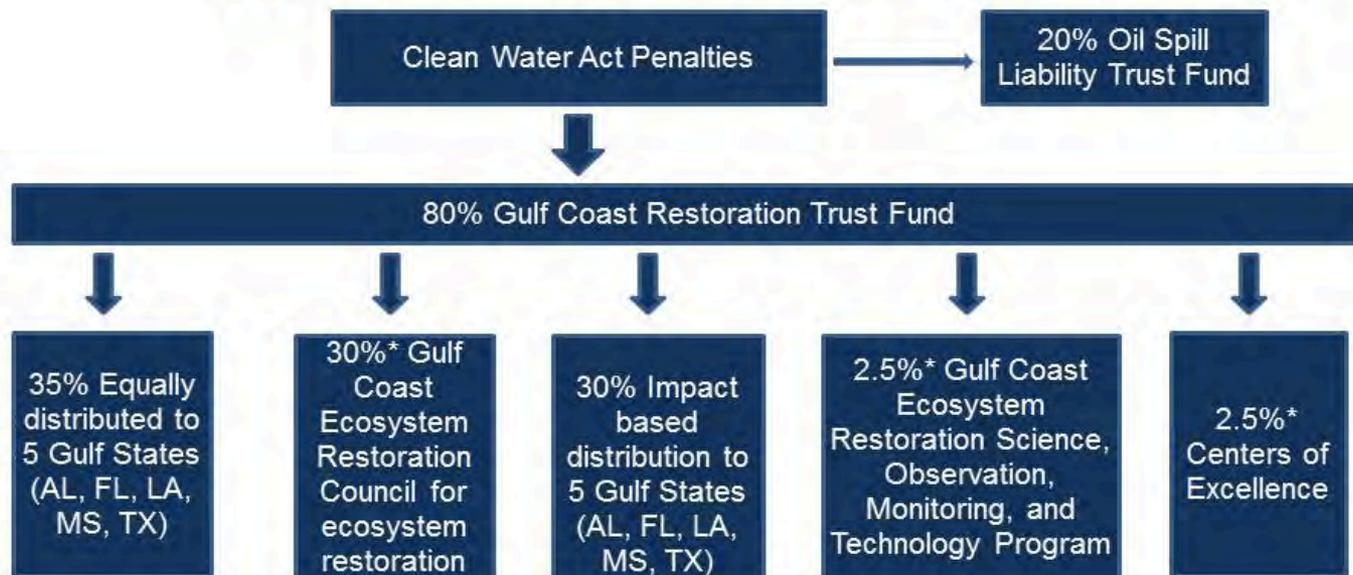
# RESTORE Act

- Signed into law July 6, 2012
- Dedicates 80% of Clean Water Act civil & admin penalties resulting from Deepwater Horizon oil spill to the Gulf Coast Restoration Trust Fund
- Created the Gulf Coast Ecosystem Restoration Council with responsibility over 60% of the Trust Fund



# Allocation of Funds

## Allocation of Gulf Coast Restoration Trust Fund



**\*Supplemented by interest generated by the Trust Fund (50% to Gulf Coast Ecosystem Restoration Council, 25% to Science Program, 25% to Centers of Excellence)**



# Gulf Coast Ecosystem Restoration Council

## **The 11-member RESTORE Council is comprised of:**

- Governors from the five (5) affected Gulf States
- Secretary of the Department of Commerce (Chair)
- Secretary of the Department of Agriculture
- Secretary of the Department of the Army
- Administrator of the Environmental Protection Agency
- Secretary of the Department of Homeland Security
- Secretary of the Department of the Interior



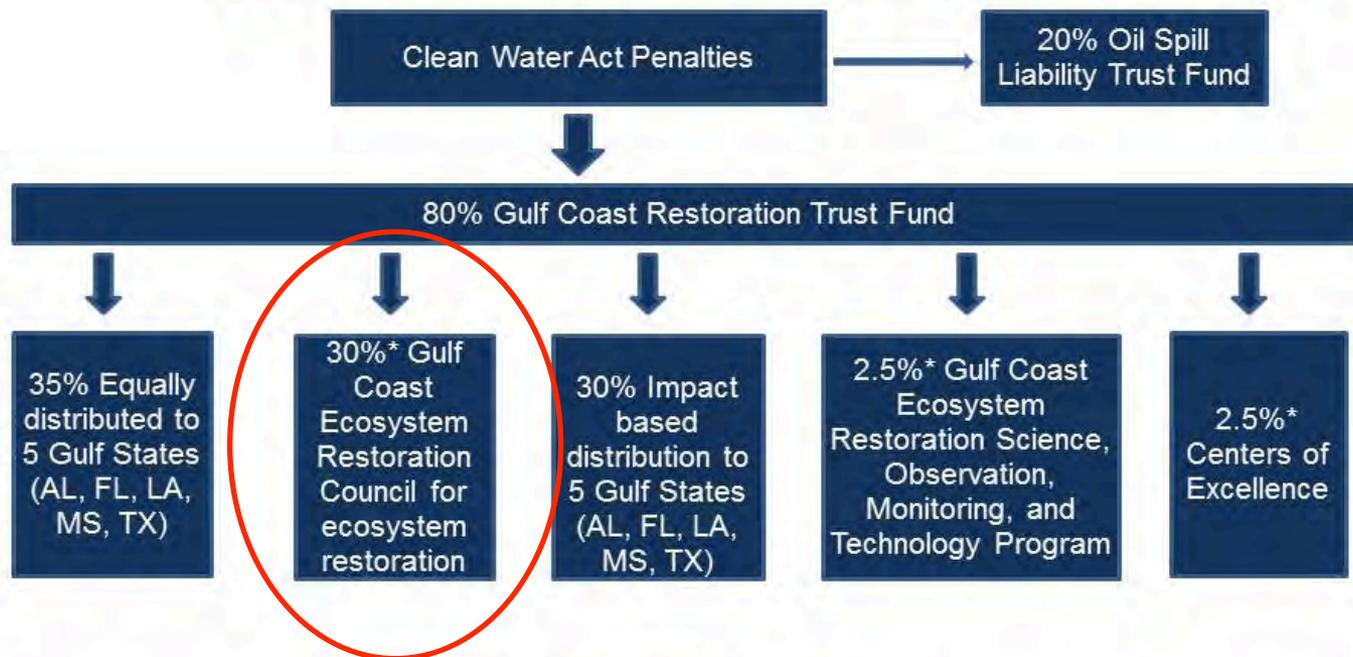
# Funding

- **Settlement with Transocean for \$1 billion Clean Water Act civil penalties**
  - 80% or \$800 million plus interest is available in the Trust Fund
- **On July 2, BP announced Agreements in Principle with the US & Gulf States**
  - Provides for \$5.5 billion Clean Water Act penalty
  - Payable over 15 years
  - Terms are subject to a Confidentiality Order
  - Will not become final until a Consent Decree is negotiated, made available for public review & approved by the court



# Bucket 2

## Allocation of Gulf Coast Restoration Trust Fund



**\*Supplemented by interest generated by the Trust Fund (50% to Gulf Coast Ecosystem Restoration Council, 25% to Science Program, 25% to Centers of Excellence)**



# Bucket 2 Requirements

- **Council to restore the Gulf “without regard to geographic location”**
- **4 Priority Criteria from the Act:**
  - Provide the greatest contribution to restoring & protecting the natural resources of the Gulf
  - Large-scale
  - Build upon existing coastal restoration plans or programs
  - Provide for long-term ecosystem resilience to areas most impacted by the DWH oil spill



# Process for Project Selection

**August 2014: Council invited Members to submit up to 5 proposals each**

**50 proposals with 380 “Components” submitted**

**All proposals & “Context Reports” posted on web**

## **Context Reports Evaluated Projects By:**

- Eligibility
- Budget
- Consistency with the Act & Initial Comprehensive Plan
- Best Available Science
- Environmental Compliance



# Focus & Emphasis Areas

## Focus Areas

- **Habitat**
- **Water Quality**

## Emphasis Areas

- **Foundational**
- **Sustainable**
- **Likely to succeed**
- **Benefits the human community**



# Initial Draft Funded Priorities List (FPL)

- **Focus on 10 Key Watersheds**
- **Highly-Leveraged**
- **Lay the Groundwork for the Future by Supporting Large-Scale Planning Projects**
- **Foundational Restoration Investments**



## Highly Leveraged Draft FPL

- If all Category 1 & 2 activities were fully implemented, this Draft FPL would build upon or leverage approximately **\$1.27 billion** additional restoration investments.
- That means that every \$1 the Council spends from Bucket 2 would build upon \$7 of prior, concurrent, or future investments.



# Draft Funded Priorities List: Two Categories

## Category 1

- Proposed for funding in final FPL
- Includes planning & on-the-ground restoration
- Applicable environmental laws addressed (e.g. NEPA)

## Category 2

- Priorities for further review & potential future funding
- Additional analysis needed, including environmental compliance
- Have planning components in Category 1



# Draft Funded Priorities List: Some Highlights

- **Conserve 9,400 acres of coastal habitat**
- **Plug 11 abandoned oil & gas wells**
- **Backfill 16.5 miles of abandoned oil & gas canals**
- **Eliminate the use of 16,000 pounds of fertilizer annually**
- **Reduce pollutant loads by 60,000 pounds annually**
- **Invest in Gulf-wide science, coordination, planning, & restoration training programs**



# Our Partners Include

- NFWF
- NRDA Trustees
- CIAP
- CWPPRA
- Knobloch Foundation
- Migratory Bird Conservation Fund
- The Conservation Fund
- TNC
- GOMRI
- Audubon
- Wildlife MS
- Several Local Cities & Counties
- USM



# Initial Draft FPL

## **10 Key Watersheds**



# Laguna Madre

Gulf of Mexico

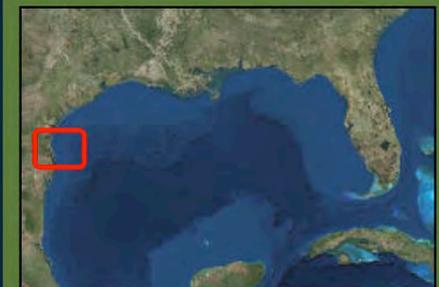


## Gulf Coast Ecosystem Restoration Council

### Laguna Madre Watershed

Restore, Protect, and Rebuild Projects

-  Plug Abandoned Oil and Gas Wells (DOI\_RESTORE\_003\_049-051\_Cat1)
-  Bahia Grande Wetland System Restoration (DOC\_RESTORE\_001\_001\_Cat1/Cat2)
-  Bahia Grande Coastal Corridor (TX\_RESTORE\_001\_000\_Cat1)



Map Date: July 16, 2015



# Laguna Madre

## Why this is a Key Watershed

- Only hyper saline coastal lagoon in North America
- Supports rare & endangered species (e.g. Kemp's Ridley Turtle & Piping Plover) & fragile habitat

## Ecological Stressors

- Habitat fragmentation from regional land uses
- Water quality/quantity & invasive species

## Council Restoration Activities

- Land acquisition (co-funded with Knobloch)
- Hydrologic restoration of coastal wetlands
- Plugging abandoned oil & gas wells



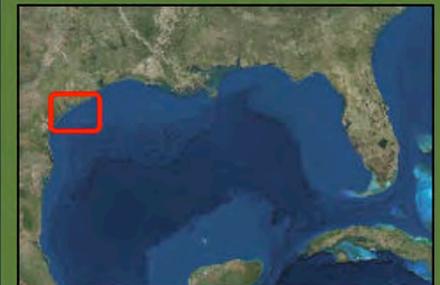
# Gulf Coast Ecosystem Restoration Council

## Matagorda Bay Watershed

Restore, Protect, and Rebuild Projects



Matagorda Bay System Priority Landscape Conservation (TX\_RESTORE\_002\_000\_Cat1)



Map Date: July 16, 2015

# Matagorda Bay



# Matagorda Bay

## Why this is a Key Watershed

- Biodiversity “hot spot” & diverse habitats
- Supports a wide variety of endangered species (e.g. whooping crane)
- Ecotourism industry

## Ecological Stressors

- Development risk & potential habitat fragmentation
- Water quality & quantity

## Council Restoration Activities

- Unique opportunity to conserve by land acquisition
- Adjoining leveraging with NFWF (Powderhorn Ranch)

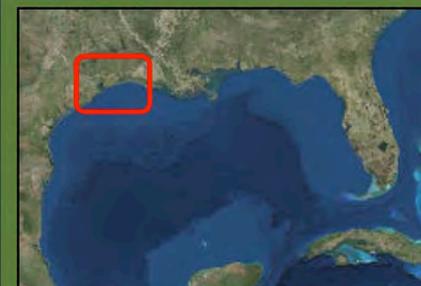


# Gulf Coast Ecosystem Restoration Council

## Galveston Bay Watershed

Restore, Protect, and Rebuild Projects

-  Bayou Greenways (TX\_RESTORE\_003\_000\_Cat1 /Cat2)
-  Texas Beneficial Use/Marsh Restoration (TX\_RESTORE\_004\_001-003\_Cat1)



Map Date: July 16, 2015

# Galveston Bay



# Galveston Bay

## Why this is a Key Watershed

- 7<sup>th</sup> largest estuary in U.S.
- Supports migratory birds & threatened & endangered species
- Supports robust fishing

## Ecological Stressors

- Coastal development
- Water quality & quantity

## Council Restoration Activities

- Riparian buffers to support habitat & water quality restoration
- Planning for beneficial use of dredged sediment

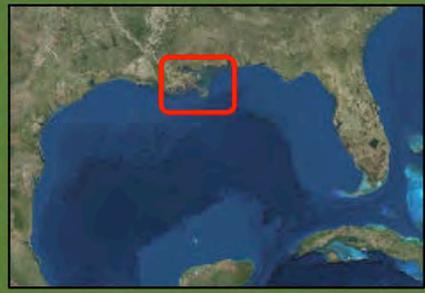


# Gulf Coast Ecosystem Restoration Council

## Mississippi River Delta

Restore, Protect, and Rebuild Projects

- Biloxi Marsh Living Shoreline (LA\_RESTORE\_003\_000\_Cat1)
- Jean Lafitte Canal Backfilling (DOI\_RESTORE\_003\_048\_Cat1)
- West Grand Terre Beach
- Nourishment and Stabilization (LA\_RESTORE\_001\_000\_Cat1)
- ▴ Golden Triangle Marsh Creation (LA\_RESTORE\_002\_000\_Cat1)
- ▭ Lowermost Mississippi River Management (LA\_RESTORE\_004\_000\_Cat1)
- ▭ Mississippi River Reintroduction into Maurepas Swamp (LA\_RESTORE\_005\_000\_Cat1)
- ◌ Bayou Dularge Ridge, Marsh & Hydrologic Restoration (USDA\_RESTORE\_006\_000\_Cat 1)
- ▭ West Grand Terre Beach



Map Date: August 11, 2015

# Mississippi River Delta

Gulf of Mexico



# Mississippi River Delta

## Why this is a Key Watershed

- World's 7<sup>th</sup> largest delta
- One of the most productive estuaries in the world
- Critical role in the nation's energy & economic security

## Ecological Stressors

- Land loss crisis (combination of factors)
- Hurricanes

## Council Restoration Activities

- Build upon investments made by the state in its Coastal Master Plan
- Large-scale planning supports river diversion, marsh restoration, & barrier islands
- Study to support more holistic management of the Lower MS River

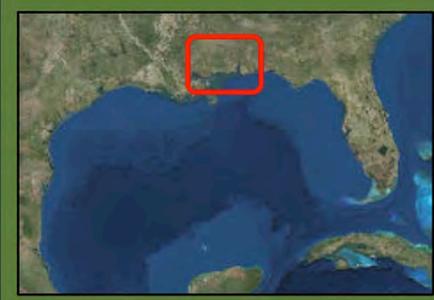


# Gulf Coast Ecosystem Restoration Council

## Mississippi Sound Watershed

Restore, Protect, and Rebuild Projects

-  Enhancing Opportunities for Beneficial Use of Dredge Sediments (MS\_RESTORE\_002\_001-006\_Cat1)
-  Deer Island Beneficial Use Site (USACE\_RESTORE\_004\_000\_Cat1)
-  Strategic Land Protection, Conservation, and Enhancement of Priority Gulf Coast Landscapes (MS\_RESTORE\_001\_002\_Cat1)
-  SeaGrant Education and Outreach (MS\_RESTORE\_001\_011\_Cat1)
-  The Mississippi Sound Estuarine Program (MS\_RESTORE\_003\_000\_Cat1)



Map Date: August 05, 2015

# Mississippi Sound

Gulf of Mexico



# Mississippi Sound

## Why this is a Key Watershed

- Diverse estuaries, bays, bayous, tidal rivers & creeks
- Ecological diversity that support commercial & recreational fishing & a nationally important oyster industry
- Largest undammed river in Lower 48 (Pascagoula)

## Ecological Stressors

- Habitat loss, fragmentation & water quality

## Council Restoration Activities

- Connecting fragmented habitat (e.g. Grand Bay, DeSoto National Forest, Gulf Islands National Seashore)
- Beneficial use to create wetlands
- MS Sound Estuary Program
- Education & Outreach pilot

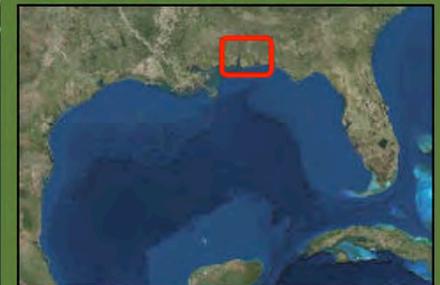


# Gulf Coast Ecosystem Restoration Council

## Mobile Bay Watershed

### Restore, Protect, and Rebuild Projects

-  Alabama Living Shorelines Program (AL\_RESTORE\_004\_001-003\_Cat1/Cat2)
-  Comprehensive Living Shoreline Monitoring (AL\_RESTORE\_004\_004\_Cat1/Cat2)
-  Enhancing Opportunities for Beneficial Use of Dredged Sediments (MS\_RESTORE\_002\_007-009\_Cat1)
-  Alabama SAV Restoration and Monitoring Program (AL\_RESTORE\_005\_001-002\_Cat1)
-  Coastal Alabama Comprehensive Watershed Restoration Planning Project (AL\_RESTORE\_003\_000\_Cat1)
-  Marsh Restoration in Fish River, Weeks Bay, Oyster Bay & Meadows Tract (DOC\_RESTORE\_001\_006-008\_Cat1/Cat2)
-  Mobile Bay National Estuary Program (EPA\_RESTORE\_002\_004\_Cat1/Cat2)
-  Upper Mobile Bay Beneficial Use Wetland Creation Site (USACE\_RESTORE\_005\_000\_Cat1)



Map Date: August 04, 2015

# Mobile Bay

Gulf of Mexico



# Mobile Bay

## Why this is a Key Watershed

- Ranks 5<sup>th</sup> in the U.S. in biodiversity & 1<sup>st</sup> east of MS River
- Robust ecotourism-including coastal & deep sea fishing

## Ecological Stressors

- Land-use conversion, shoreline hardening, invasive species, & water quality degradation

## Council Restoration Activities

- Supporting the Mobile Bay National Estuary Program
- Watershed planning
- Living shoreline & SAV restoration & monitoring
- Beneficial use of dredged sediments to restore wetlands
- Marsh restoration

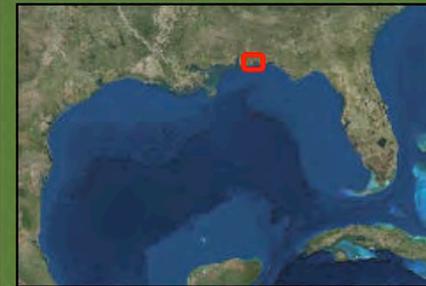


# Gulf Coast Ecosystem Restoration Council

## Pensacola Bay Watershed

Restore, Protect, and Rebuild Projects

-  Pensacola Bay Living Shoreline - Phase I (FL\_RESTORE\_001\_002\_Cat1/Cat2)
-  Beach Haven - Joint Stormwater & Wastewater Improvement Project-Phase II (FL\_RESTORE\_001\_004\_Cat1)
-  Bayou Chico Contaminated Sediment Removal- Planning, Design, and Permitting (FL\_RESTORE\_001\_005\_Cat1)



Map Date: August 11, 2015

# Pensacola Bay

Gulf of Mexico



# Pensacola Bay

## Why this is a Key Watershed

- Diverse habitats support more than 200 species of fish & shellfish, including rare, imperiled, or threatened plant & animal species

## Ecological Stressors

- Urban development & water quality degradation resulting in decreased oyster habitat & harvest areas & SAV habitat

## Council Restoration Activities

- Implement stormwater/wastewater projects
- Planning for contaminated sediment removal to improve water quality & habitats
- Living shoreline restoration



# Gulf Coast Ecosystem Restoration Council

## Apalachicola Bay Watershed Restore, Protect, and Rebuild Projects

-  Apalachicola Bay Oyster Restoration (FL\_RESTORE\_002\_006\_Cat1/Cat2)
-  Money Bayou Wetlands Restoration (DOC\_RESTORE\_001\_009\_Cat1/Cat2)
-  Apalachicola Watershed Agriculture Water Quality Improvement (FL\_RESTORE\_002\_005\_Cat1)
-  Tate's Hell Strategy 1 (USDA\_RESTORE\_002\_001\_Cat1/Cat2)



Map Date: August 04, 2015

# Apalachicola Bay <sup>Gulf of Mexico</sup>



# Apalachicola Bay

## Why this is a Key Watershed

- One of the most productive estuaries in the country, famous for its oysters
- Designated environmentally sensitive resource (e.g. NERR, Outstanding Florida Water, Florida Aquatic Preserve, & International Man & the Biosphere Program)

## Ecological Stressors

- Water quality & quantity

## Council Restoration Activities

- Working with participating landowners to improve water quality & quantity
- Hydrologic restoration of coastal wetlands & forest
- Oyster restoration building off of NRDA Early Restoration

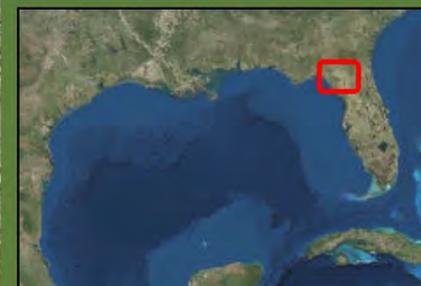


# Gulf Coast Ecosystem Restoration Council

## Suwannee Watershed

Restore, Protect, and Rebuild Projects

 Suwannee River Partnership Irrigation  
Water Enhancement Program  
(FL\_RESTORE\_003\_003\_Cat1)



Map Date: August 04, 2015

# Suwannee Watershed

Gulf of Mexico

Suwannee River



# Suwannee Watershed

## Why this is a Key Watershed

- Covers over 7,700 miles
- Big Bend Region includes one of the two largest contiguous seagrass beds in the U.S.
- Sustains premier FL scallop population & variety of wildlife

## Ecological Stressors

- Water quality & quantity

## Council Restoration Activities

- Working with private landowners to improve water management
- Activities will decrease fertilizer application & improve freshwater inflows

# Tampa Bay

Gulf of Mexico

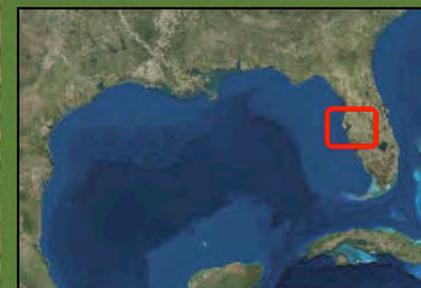
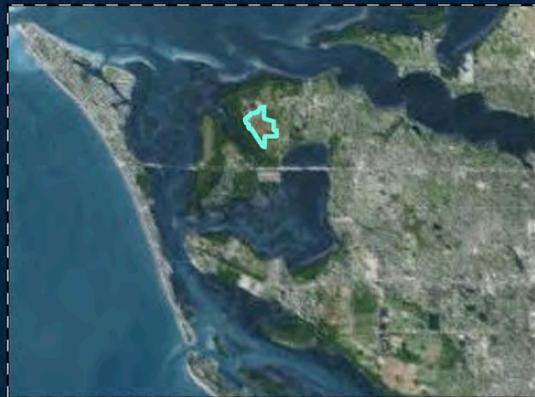


Gulf Coast  
Ecosystem  
Restoration  
Council

## Tampa Bay Watershed

Restore, Protect, and Rebuild Projects

-  Palm River Restoration Project Phase II, East McKay Bay (FL\_RESTORE\_004\_003\_Cat1/Cat2)
-  Robinson Preserve Wetlands Restoration (DOC\_RESTORE\_001\_011\_Cat1/Cat2)
-  Tampa Bay National Estuary Program (EPA\_RESTORE\_002\_005\_Cat1/Cat2)



Map Date: July 16, 2015



# Tampa Bay

## Why this is a Key Watershed

- Largest open water estuary in FL at nearly 400 miles
- Supports manatees, wading birds, & over 200 species of fish

## Ecological Stressors

- Urban development & stormwater runoff

## Council Restoration Activities

- Supporting highly successful Tampa Bay NEP
- Habitat restoration, water quality improvement, & mitigation of erosion along the Palm River
- Hydrologic restoration of Robinson Preserve



# Gulf Coast Ecosystem Restoration Council

## Gulf-wide Investments

### Foundational Projects

- Council Monitoring & Assessment Program Development (DOC\_RESTORE\_002\_001\_Cat1)
- Strategic Conservation Assessment Framework (MS\_RESTORE\_001\_009\_Cat1)
- GOMA Coordination (AL\_RESTORE\_002\_001\_Cat1)
- Gulf of Mexico Conservation Enhancement Grant Program (MS\_RESTORE\_001\_005\_Cat1/Cat2)
- Gulf of Mexico Habitat Restoration via Conservation Corps Partnerships (DOC\_RESTORE\_003\_007\_Cat1)
- Gulf Coast Conservation Reserve Program (MS\_RESTORE\_001\_007\_Cat1/Cat2)
- Gulf of Mexico Estuary Program (GMEP) (EPA\_RESTORE\_003\_008\_Cat1)
- Baseline Flow, Gage Analysis & On-Line Tool to Support Restoration (EPA\_RESTORE\_004\_000\_Cat1/Cat2)



Map Date: July 16, 2015

# Foundational Gulf-wide Investments



# Foundational Gulf-wide Investments

- **Gulf-wide grant program to address habitat & water quality/quantity**
- **Support science-based decision making:**
  - Planning tools to support habitat & water quality/quantity restoration
  - Restoration monitoring & coordination
- **Gulf Coast Conservation Corps Program:**
  - Equip local workforce with knowledge & skills to implement & manage restoration projects
  - Work with Federally-recognized Tribes to provide a tribal youth program

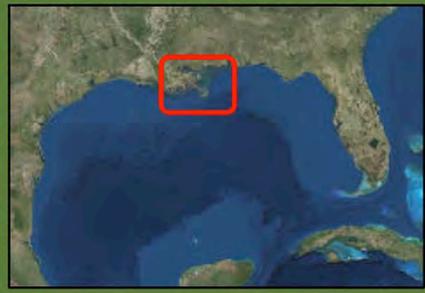


# Gulf Coast Ecosystem Restoration Council

## Mississippi River Delta

### Restore, Protect, and Rebuild Projects

- Biloxi Marsh Living Shoreline (LA\_RESTORE\_003\_000\_Cat1)
- Jean Lafitte Canal Backfilling (DOI\_RESTORE\_003\_048\_Cat1)
- West Grand Terre Beach
- Nourishment and Stabilization (LA\_RESTORE\_001\_000\_Cat1)
- Golden Triangle Marsh Creation (LA\_RESTORE\_002\_000\_Cat1)
- Lowermost Mississippi River Management (LA\_RESTORE\_004\_000\_Cat1)
- Mississippi River Reintroduction into Maurepas Swamp (LA\_RESTORE\_005\_000\_Cat1)
- Bayou Dularge Ridge, Marsh & Hydrologic Restoration (USDA\_RESTORE\_006\_000\_Cat 1)



Map Date: August 11, 2015

# Mississippi River Delta

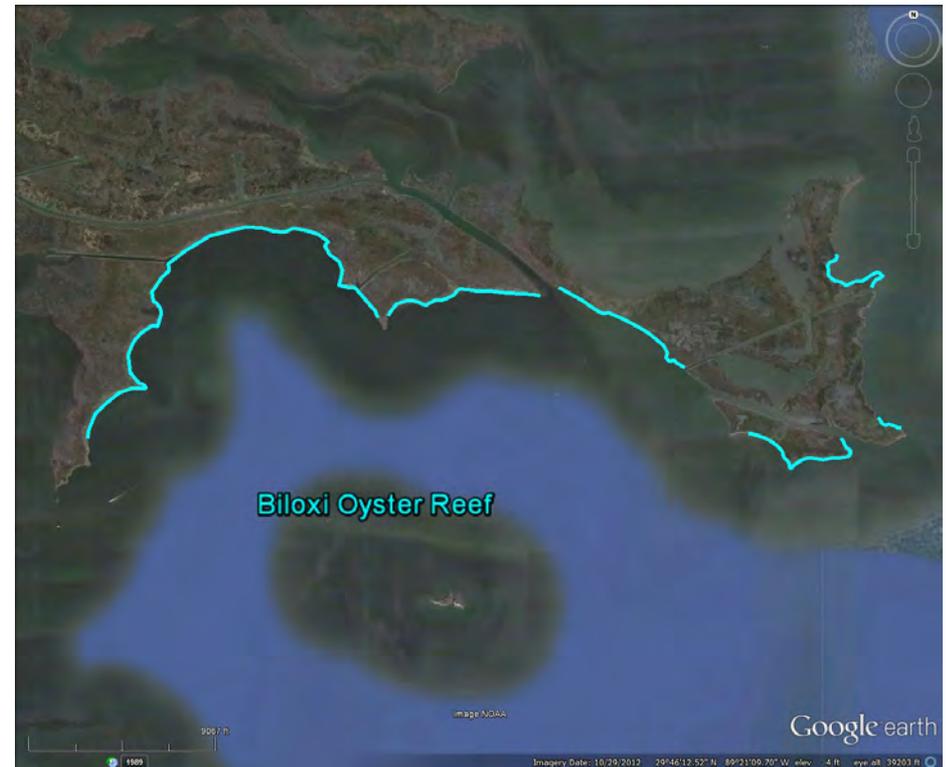
Gulf of Mexico



# Proposed LA Projects

## Biloxi Marsh Living Shoreline

- **Cost:** \$3.2M
- **Sponsor:** LA
- **Status:** Planning
- **If funded for implementation:** would create 47,000 ft of living shoreline





# Proposed LA Projects

## West Grand Terre Beach Nourishment

- **Cost:** \$7.3M
- **Sponsor:** LA
- **Status:** Planning
- **If funded for implementation:**  
would enhance dune & back-barrier marsh habitat to provide storm surge and wave attenuation



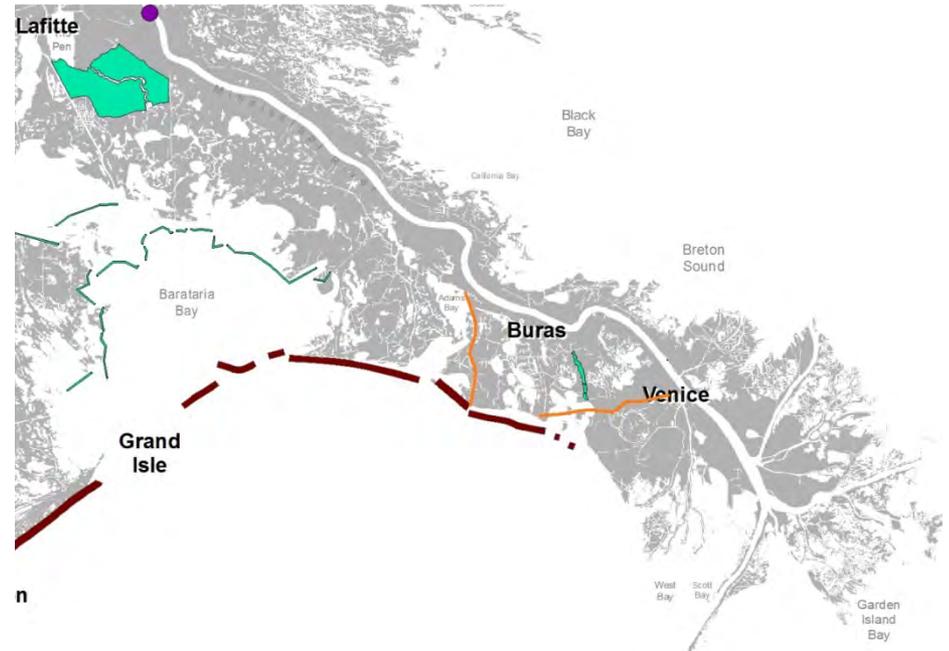




# Proposed LA Projects

## Lowermost Mississippi River Management

- **Cost:** \$9.3M
- **Sponsor:** LA
- **Partner:** USACE
- **Status:** Planning

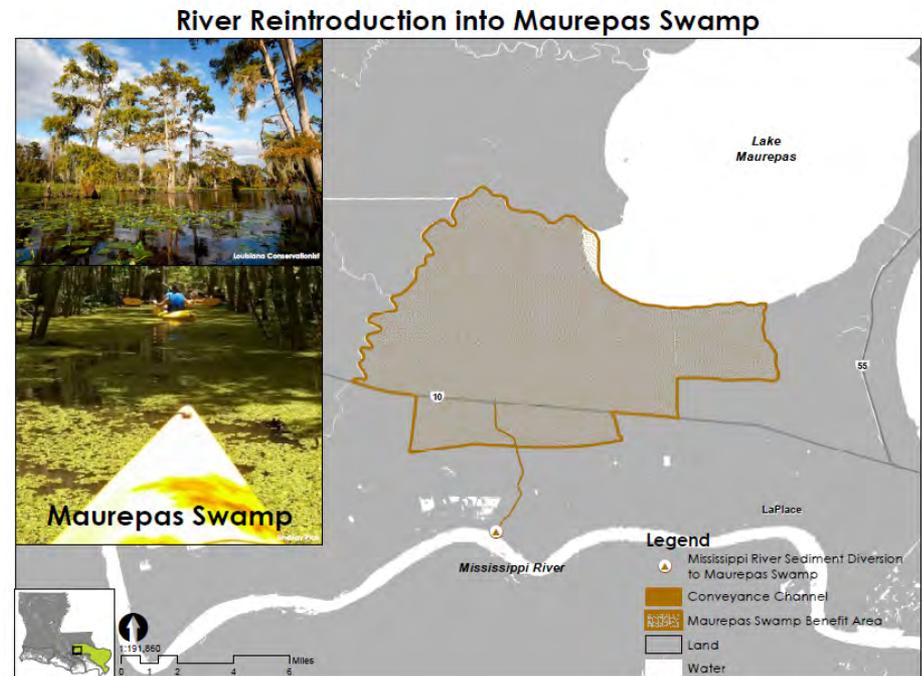




# Proposed LA Projects

## MS River Reintroduction into Maurepas Swamp

- **Cost:** \$14.2M
- **Sponsor:** LA
- **Status:** Planning
- **If funded for implementation:** would restore & enhance ~45,220 acres of forested wetland

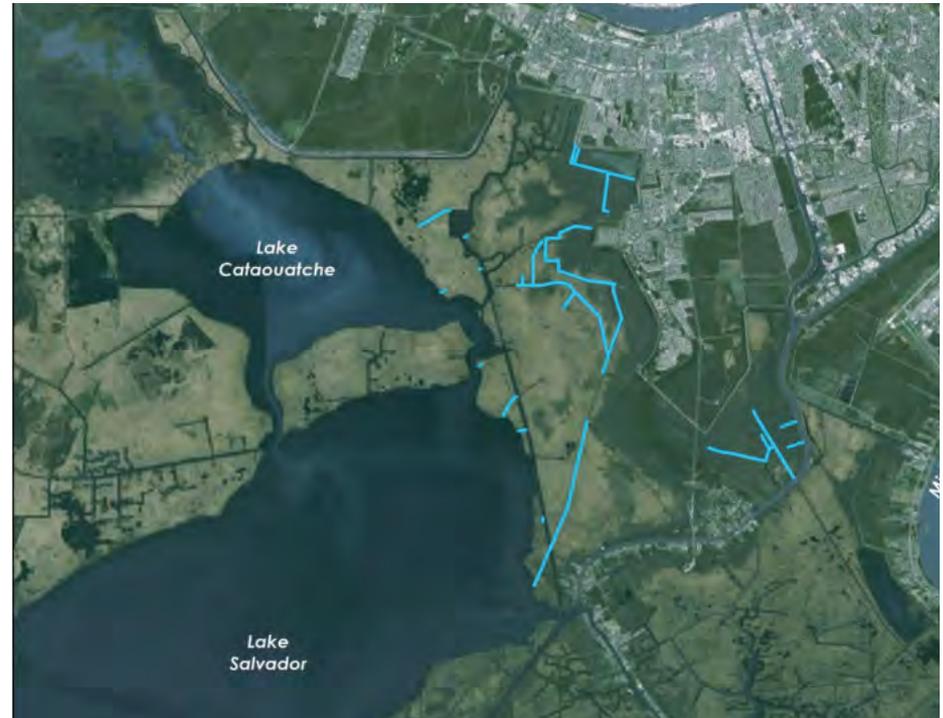




# Proposed LA Projects

## Jean Lafitte Canal Backfilling

- **Cost:** \$8.7 M
- **Sponsor:** DOI
- **Status:** Implementation
- **If funded:** Backfill ~16.5 miles of canals





# Proposed LA Projects

## Bayou Dularge Ridge, Marsh & Hydrologic Restoration

- **Cost:** \$5.2M
- **Sponsor:** USDA on behalf of the Federally Recognized Chitimacha Tribe of Louisiana
- **Status:** Planning
- **If funded for implementation:**  
would result in ~540 acres of marsh & ridge habitat





## Next Steps

- **Hold Public Meetings in all Five Gulf States**
- **Take Public Comment on the Draft FPL**
- **Carefully Review Public Comment**
- **Make Changes to the FPL as appropriate**
- **Hold a Public Meeting to Vote on Approval of Final FPL**

**Comments Due By: Sept. 28, 2015**

Submit online: [www.RestoreTheGulf.gov](http://www.RestoreTheGulf.gov)

Mail: Gulf Coast Ecosystem Restoration Council

Draft FPL Comments

Hale Boggs Federal Building, Suite 1117

New Orleans, LA 70130

Email: [draftfplcomments@restorethegulf.gov](mailto:draftfplcomments@restorethegulf.gov)

# Thank You

For More Information Visit:  
[www.RestoreTheGulf.gov](http://www.RestoreTheGulf.gov)

